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ABSTRACT

To help California school board members fulfill their duties, this guidebook tells them how to begin evaluating district curriculum and instructional materials. The first chapter reviews school boards' legal responsibilities for educational program evaluation, under California state law, state board of education decrees, and legal interpretations. Chapter two gives the beginning steps in evaluating instructional programs and suggests what individual board members' roles should be and what they should ask when visiting the schools. The formal evaluation process is discussed in chapter three, including district goal-setting, a sample board policy on curriculum planning, the instructional evaluation cycle, educators' and community members' roles in evaluation, and resources and criteria for the evaluation process. The final chapter presents examples of how four California school boards handled the evaluation of their instructional programs. Attached to the guidebook are a brief bibliography and a sample schedule for textbook evaluation. (Author/RW)

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Curriculum *Is* a Board Member Responsibility

How to

Evaluate Your School Instructional Program

Prepared by the 1980-81
CSBA Task Force on
Evaluation of Instructional
Programs and Materials

3

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Foreword

This book is the result of almost a year's work by a CSBA task force which was formed in late 1980 when evaluation of instructional programs and materials was identified as an area of major importance for public school trustees.

"As dollars are restricted, the importance of effective programs increases. Board members must have a method for evaluating the quality of instructional programs and materials," reads CSBA's rationale for the establishment of the task force.

The task force, a dedicated group of school board members and a CSBA staff member whose names appear on the flyleaf, was charged with examining the role of the board in the evaluation of instructional programs and materials, with identifying exceptional practices and programs involving board members in this area, and with producing this book.

Excuses ... Excuses

Board members often have a way of rationalizing their non-involvement in the curriculum process. Try the following on "for size." If they fit too well, perhaps this book will help answer those concerns.

- I don't have time. I hardly have time to read the agenda.
- I don't feel competent; I'm not trained for curriculum work.
- Where do we draw the line between administration and policy? I don't want to step out of line.
- That's why we hired the superintendent.
- The law doesn't say I have to be a curriculum expert.
- I think we are treading on dangerous ground when we start tinkering in areas that are not within our area of expertise.
- That's the curriculum people's job. If they aren't doing it, let's fire them.
- My expertise is in school finance — not curriculum.
- If the educators don't know how to improve the curriculum, how can you expect board members to know?
- I wasn't elected to be a curriculum expert.
- Our problem is money — not curriculum.

Introduction

Most candidates seeking election to boards of education hope to positively affect the quality of education that their students receive. Candidates' election brochures and public pronouncements contain glowing generalities on how to change the district's program for the better.

But once seated at the board table, members realize that curriculum issues become more numerous and more complex. The question evolves into "where do we start?"

CSBA hopes this publication will be a starting point for many board members; however, board members must tailor what they find here to fit the needs of their own districts.

The task of boards is more than approving the allocation of resources. Boards must also set the tone for their districts — an atmosphere, a direction and a commitment to quality education.

The ablest and most helpful school board members are those who become knowledgeable about and keenly interested in the curriculum, but who are willing to leave detailed and technical school management and all instructional matters to the superintendent and his or her staff.

To play this role to the best possible advantage, you, as a school board member, need to do some exploring.

- What are your legal responsibilities regarding curriculum and the instructional program?
- How can you be comfortable about curriculum involvement?
- How do you establish a curriculum development policy, custom-made for your district?
- What are your tools for evaluation?

Let's explore together!

Chapter 1

Curriculum Is a Board Member Responsibility

"The governing board of every school district shall evaluate its educational program and shall make such revisions as it deems necessary."

— *California Education Code*

At its May, 1981 meeting, CSBA's Delegate Assembly approved a resolution which states in part that "...the State Board of Education and State Department of Education encourage local governing boards to undertake a systematic review of their districts' educational programs to determine the extent to which the programs are of sufficient quality to meet the educational needs of all students."

The resolution states further that "... local governing boards be encouraged to continue their commitment to the review of curriculum with the intent of improving curriculum and instruction."

This resolution responded to concerns by some State Board members that education in California is not as rigorous as it could be. Assertions have been made that California's students are electing less rigorous courses; SAT scores are not high enough; graduation requirements are low; textbooks are not sufficiently challenging; fewer homework assignments are given.

Are such generalizations justified? Only you at the local district level can make these kinds of judgements. You carry the responsibility for an ongoing assessment of your district's curriculum and instructional program.

The Heart of the Program

The emphasis on curriculum goes to the heart of the board member's role. It has always been a "job requirement" that a school board determine the general scope of the instructional program in accordance with the laws and regulations of the state.

In the same general way, boards have also been involved in the selection and approval of instructional materials that are used in a basic or supplementary way in the instructional program. In recent years, however, it would appear that boards have sidestepped this general obligation, satisfying themselves with the knowledge that professional educators were doing the job. Board members must be involved in curriculum evaluation. At meetings, some school boards may routinely adopt a set of curriculum and instructional program proposals put together by the superintendent and his or her staff, without having studied such proposals. Board members have a right to question areas which they do not understand or proposals which have not emerged from a well-defined process..

The local school district should be a vehicle to meet the needs and preserve the uniqueness and values of the community. As a matter of tradition, the public expects the local school board to uphold community values, promote the public's interests, supervise the school staff, conserve the community's resources and improve the learning program. However, boards must ofter defer to a variety

of state — and sometimes federal — curriculum mandates.

Why Board Member Involvement in Curriculum?

As a school board member, you have specific legal responsibilities in carrying out the instructional programs in your district. They may be:

- Statute — by legislative mandate
- Regulation — by State Board of Education/State Department decree
- Interpretation — by authorized opinion (eg. court, PERB)

You are a delegated community representative — the "public" side of public education. As an elected representative, you are the "checks and balances" of the system. Yours must be a personal commitment to maintain or to improve the quality of education. Curriculum IS public education, and your challenge is to be cognizant of the changes that are constantly taking place.

Climate for Change

One of the more subtle functions of the board is to establish a climate for change. When curriculum concerns are discussed, when openness to new ideas is evident, when board members consider the evaluation of instructional programs and materials a district priority, you provide an example of your concern for excellence.

The board's responsibility is to enact policy about curriculum, but implementation of these decisions depends on the commitment of staff. A curriculum development process which involves teachers, parents and students, as well as administrators and board members, will make your goal of an effective curriculum easier to acheive.

Education Code Mandates

The Education Code of California sets out not only the responsibilities of school board trustees in the area of instructional programs and materials but also sets broad minimum standards and guidelines to follow. This is to encourage local school districts to develop programs that will best fit the needs and interests of its pupils as well as the interests of the state of California.

In general, the Code mandates that "the governing board of every school district shall:

- keep on file for public inspection the courses of study prescribed for the schools under its jurisdiction.
- evaluate its educational program and make such revisions as it deems necessary.
- enforce in its schools the courses of study and the use of textbooks and other instructional materials prescribed and adopted by proper authority."

However, the Education Code is very specific in certain sections, particularly those dealing with "prescribed courses."

Courses of Study

Section 51210 of the Education Code sets forth the general outlines of the course of study for the elementary grades. English, mathematics, social sciences, science, fine arts, health, and physical education instruction is mandated for elementary schools under this section. Definitions of each of these areas of instruction is included within the section. [Section 51220 contains similar provisions for grades seven through 12.]

Other sections of the Code define foreign language guidelines and mandate certain specific subjects to be included in social science courses. For example, section 51211 includes the requirement that social sciences provide "a foundation for understanding the wise use of natural resources." And section 51213 mandates that instruction in the social sciences include the study of the history of California, and the role and contributions of minorities and women.

Bilingual education, special education and other programs are also mandated under federal or state law. But, in every instance, even mandated programs allow for major discretion by school trustees which necessitates an evaluation process in order for trustees to fulfill their mission in providing the best educational program for the district's students.

Before you take the first steps toward evaluating your instructional programs and materials, be sure to read the applicable sections of the Education Code to define your role as a school trustee — especially the limits placed on that role.

Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Article 3 of the California Education Code deals with "Requirements, Materials." Sections 60040 through 60047 outline specific requirements and prohibitions. For instance, biased, propagandistic or inaccurate materials are prohibited as is the adoption of materials containing "any matter reflecting adversely upon persons because of their race, color, creed, national origin, ancestry, sex or occupation."

Responsibility for determining that instructional materials meet the standards in the Code is vested in the governing board. "All instructional materials adopted by any governing board for use in the schools shall be, to the satisfaction of the governing board, accurate, objective, and current and suited to the needs and comprehension of pupils at their respective grade levels." [Section 60045 of the Education Code]

Chapter 2
First Steps in Evaluating Curriculum and Materials

Now that you've read Chapter 1 and the pertinent sections of the Education Code, you should be firmly convinced that you, as a board member, have a role in evaluating your district's programs and materials.

Now what?

Your first step is to gather information. Reading, workshops, and classroom visits will all provide valuable information. This book, the *California School Boards* journal and other materials listed in the bibliography on page 27, and workshops such as CSBA's curriculum institutes and ACSA's spring conference on curriculum will educate you about curriculum and instruction and will help you feel comfortable about your role. Examine your district policies.

Armed with this information, visit the classrooms in your own schools to gain insights into the program currently offered. Because your purpose is the examination of the program and not to evaluate the teacher's performance, be sure to keep your perspective on this issue. To make your visit productive, ask questions to clarify the objectives of the course and its relationship to other subjects offered. Some of the questions you might ask both during your visit and at board meetings are on pages 8 and 10. A guide for school visits is on page 9.

What exactly is your role?

As an individual board member you will do the following:

- Observe the curriculum in action through classroom visits and by asking questions.
- Represent the board on curriculum committees.
  To prevent any one board member from becoming *the* curriculum expert, it is best to rotate this representation. And if there are several committees and subcommittees (as in large districts), each committee should include a board member.
- Be objective.
  Refrain from insisting that a "favorite" area of curriculum take precedence over others. A board member should not be on a soapbox, regardless of background or personal preferences. Teamwork is vital here to determine what is best for all students in the district.
- Keep informed.
  Know all board actions and how changes affect curriculum implementation. Be prepared to explain why the board took the action.
- Be knowledgable.
  Test scores are often all the public will notice. Know about your district's testing program and the relevancy of test results to evaluation of the program.

- Keep in contact.
  Try to reach individuals who have expressed concerns regarding curriculum. Be approachable and articulate, but astute and resourceful enough to refer "professional" questions to those who have the answers.
- Reach out.
  Speak to community groups about what's happening in the schools' instructional program. The media do not always reflect the positive side of public education. For those local residents whose only source of information about their schools is the local press, your presentation can be truly enlightening, and at the same time serve as a process to reach parent and non-parent members of the community.

Questions... and More Questions!

Before visiting the classrooms you might ask:

- What are our district's graduation requirements? Do they meet today's expectations?
- What percentage of our students are enrolled in college bound courses? Are all segments of the school population represented in this group?
- Are enough of our students taking the more advanced academic courses such as: fourth year of English, lab sciences, advanced math, science and language?
- Are our elective courses an integral part of our educational program and as rigorous as required courses?
- Do our standards regarding grading, homework, attendance and conduct encourage high academic performance?
- Is the selection system for the pattern of student course work effective? For example, are your seniors electing easier programs than sophmores or juniors?
- In our efforts at budget cutting have we unbalanced our course offerings by eliminating advanced or low enrollment academic or vocational courses?

You can brainstorm additional questions to fit your district's situation as you see it.

Beyond what each board member does individually, the board collectively should:

- Recognize its responsibility for curriculum involvement.
  Even if you are the only board member to have become interested in this area thus far, all members of the board must become involved.
- Be aware of the pulse of the community.
  Are the needs of *all* children being addressed? Are there demographic or other changes in your community that should be considered? Is the community aware of the way regulations relate to curriculum (such as title programs, categorical programs, desegregation programs and so forth)?
- Be responsive and objective.
  Not only to the interests of your own community but, selectively, to educational trends.

School Visitations CAN Be Fun, If You...

- Make an appointment with the principal and plan ahead. "Drop-in" visitors are not nearly as welcome as those who are expected.
- Request that an administrator or someone familiar with the curriculum accompany you to help answer questions.
- Observe what's going on and talk to the teacher and/or the students only if you feel it will not disrupt the learning environment.
- Spend some time with — or at least greet — classified staff. They help run the schools, too!
- Have lunch or take "break time" with the staff. An informal time outside of the classroom helps to "personalize" your visit.
- Recognize that each school has its own unique qualities and should be perceived individually.
- Don't expect "performances," but be content to see the regular school program in action.
- Make the most of your time by having the principal or the office help you schedule around recesses, lunch periods or special activities.
- Be a good listener.
- Have a positive attitude. Your visit sets the tone for others — and YOU may want to come back, too!

- Be informed.
  Request staff presentations on curriculum, involving teachers and site level staff as well as district directors and supervisors. (It's a good idea to vary the content of the presentations so that as many of the curriculum components as possible are identified and discussed.). Hold the superintendent and staff responsible for accountability, implementation and review.
- Review.
  Review "pilot" courses, as appropriate, respecting the judgement of the professionals as to the worth of the course to the students. Have the courage to make the hard decisions on instituting, continuing, or discontinuing "popular" or "unpopular" courses, based upon a sound evaluation process.
- Sunset.
  Recognize the need for "sunsetting" curriculum where appropriate.

Questions to Ask During Your School Visit

- What did the student(s) learn from the course?
- How was student learning increased? Was it measurable? How?
- Does the program and/or materials relate to the total educational program? In what way?
- What makes this a quality program?
- What are the constraints? (e.g. time, money, personnel, special resources, etc.)
- Is it cost effective, as an individual item and in relationship to the total program?
- What resources have been and will continue to be available?

Chapter 3
A Formal Evaluation Process

Boards of education are policymakers. While they carry legal responsibilities to adopt a course of study, to approve textbooks, to employ qualified personnel and to evaluate student progress, it is *not* the job of a school governing board to perform the tasks. Rather, to ensure the success of the curriculum and the instructional program, the board establishes a process, preferably as a written part of the board's policy manual, by which curriculum is established, reviewed, revised and evaluated.

Check your district's policy manual and see if a curriculum development process is included. If it is not, don't be too surprised or critical; it is only in the past several years that a process statement has become a commonly accepted need.

Board policies not only have the force of law in your district, but are the reflection of the school district's philosophy, goals and objectives. So, whether your district already has policies in the curriculum areas or not, the first step in the process is to establish or revise your district's policies so they are in line with your district's philosophy, goals and objectives.

What is meant by "philosophy?" "Goals?" "Objectives?"

According to the Education Code,

> "Philosophy" means a composite statement of the relationship between the individual and society based upon beliefs, concepts, and attitudes from which the goals and objectives of the district are derived.
>
> "Goal" means a statement of broad direction or intent which is general and timeless and is not concerned with a particular achievement within a specified time period.
>
> "Objective" means a specific accomplishment to be reached that can be verified within a given time and under specifiable conditions which, if attained, advances the system toward a corresponding goal.

In other words, these three concepts establish your district's "climate for learning," its values and its direction.

Philosophy, Goals and Objectives: A Board Responsibility

Setting district philosophy and establishing district goals and objectives is one of your most important functions as a governing board. The community must have input into this process, and then the board must translate what is often a multiplicity of opinions into one coherent statement of direction for the school district. Writing philosophy is a difficult and time-consuming task and boards often tend to skip over or put off this chore. But once tackled and completed, development of a philosophy and goals can be the most rewarding effort of your school board career.

And this statement will be the standard by which all the district's educational (both instructional and non-instructional) programs

and efforts will be measured.

The *philosophy* will be the broad umbrella under which your goals and objectives will fall. A statement such as "an informed public is the cornerstone of a public school system" would be a philosophical phrase. The *goal* would translate to "the district will strive to keep the public informed." And the *objective* would be very specific, such as, "the district will produce five newsletters a year to be disseminated to the community at large."

In the area of curriculum, the philosophical statement that "If a democracy is to survive and flourish, it is important that all individuals be provided equal educational opportunities and be encouraged to achieve their potentials," would be followed with specific goals such as "the schools will provide all students with the opportunity to participate in educational experiences which will help students achieve: ... intellectual growth and development." And/or ... "physical fitness, health and safety." And/or whatever best fits your unique circumstances. The objectives would be the specific means by which the goals would be reached.

Samples of district philosophy, goals and objectives statements are available from CSBA's policy services unit, but each district must tailor any samples to fit the unique needs of its own community's interests and values.

Comprehensive Curriculum Planning

Now that you've developed your district's philosophy, goals and objectives, review your policy manual so that all district policies are consistent with these statements. And, if there is no existing policy on curriculum planning or if the current one is inadequate, the following CSBA-approved sample policy could be adapted to fit your district's needs. It contains all the elements for evaluating instructional programs and materials recommended in this book:

Sample Board Policy

Members of the Board of Education are chosen by the electorate and become the community representatives to the educational decision-making process. They are charged with the responsibility for creating policy and allocating resources to educate the district's children and youth. These tasks must be accomplished under the laws of the State of California and within the district's financial resources.

Board members continually seek to improve their knowledge of curriculum and learning principles through an organized program of reading; discussions with students, community members, and

professional staff; attendance at conferences and workshops; and classroom visitations.

In concert with the district superintendent and the instructional staff, the Board identifies the community's desires and needs for its students and translates them into a statement of philosophy and a list of goals. The district's philosophy and goals become the touchstone of the educational program.

The Board, being aware that specific educational techniques are the responsibility of a well-trained professional staff, sees its major responsibilities as making provisions for instructional leadership, equipment, and materials of instruction and taking such other facilitating actions as may be required and can be afforded to meet the needs of the students and, thus, to achieve the goals of the community.

It is a professional staff responsibility to consolidate curriculum plans generated at site council, local school, and district levels and to coordinate the efforts being made at these and other levels with county, state, and federal legislative efforts to effect educational change. As part of this responsibility, the professional staff establishes procedures for gathering data concerning appropriateness of the existing curriculum and effectiveness of the existing program. These data are reviewed periodically by the Board and staff as they evaluate district programs and monitor student progress toward the achievement of district goals.

The Board and superintendent are responsible for facilitating the development of general guidelines for the curriculum planning process. In addition to their use by the professional staff, these guidelines are tools for the Board and community to use in reviewing individual programs as the programs progress from conception to planning, implementation, evaluation and revision. The following elements are included in the curriculum planning guidelines.

1. The district establishes a calendar covering a six-year period for the evaluation and revision of curriculum for all subject matter areas. The calendar coordinates the State Framework development and textbook adoption timelines. The calendar consists of:
   - district philosophy and goals review
   - needs assessment and curriculum review, utilizing the district's philosophy (goals and objectives)
   - development of plans to meet identified needs
   - adoption and implementation of the resulting programs
   - evaluation of the program's effectiveness.

   The process is continuous and cyclic. Over a period of years, all

subject areas go through the cycle. This allows for evolution and change in curriculum to meet the emerging needs of students and society.

2. When adopting the budget each year, the Board considers the district's instructional program needs and provides necessary funds for curriculum planning, program implementation, evaluation, and staff development. Adequate provision for released time is also a part of the budget consideration.
3. All persons affected by curriculum design are in some way represented in the planning process. Teachers, administrators, students, and parents normally participate in the process. Consultants and subject matter specialists participate as needed.
4. Articulation between instructional levels is part of the ongoing planning process.
5. Knowledge of California Education Code sections is essential to ensure compliance with mandated program requirements and to ensure that parameters for options are understood.
6. The Board is aware that consideration of how children learn is an essential element in all curriculum planning. The Board encourages and provides assistance to the professional staff in developing a statement of principles about how children learn. These principles become an integral part of the district's curriculum planning process.
7. An appropriate combination and balance needs to be maintained in the instruction methods, the language processes, and the content of the total educational program.
   A balance of content in the students' total educational program includes courses in the social sciences and humanities, in mathematics and science, and in the practical and fine arts.
8. A balance of instructional methods is a part of all classroom experiences, kindergarten through grade twelve. These methods include individual work/study, small group interaction, and whole class experiences. The exclusive use of one instructional method is considered educationally unsound.
   A balance of language processes is a part of classroom instruction in all areas. Speaking, listening, reading, writing, seeing, and touching are processes used in all classrooms. Research confirms that nonverbal as well as verbal processes sharpen and enrich reading and writing skills.
9. Assessment of staff development needs and establishment of provisions for meeting such needs are part of the planning process.

1. A Cycle of Curriculum Review

After the first introductory paragraphs of this sample policy, the first point it makes is that the process is continuous and cyclic.

The adoption of a calendar of curriculum review has several advantages. It ensures that all areas of the curriculum will be reviewed on a regular schedule. It permits this process to be carried out by a relatively small staff of curriculum experts. A district using the calendar system in the school year 1980-81 is evaluating, for instance, the math program K-12 and planning necessary changes. Next year (1981-82), textbooks will be adopted and preparation made for teacher inservice. During the third year (1982-83), the new program will be implemented, monitored, and adjusted as needed and teacher inservice sessions will be held. Depending on the calendar selected, two or three instructional areas will be subject to different phases of this process.

2. Budgeting for Curriculum Review

If educational quality is to be maintained, curriculum development must carry a high priority. But the process of development and review has financial implications which must be addressed in the district budget. The kinds of costs to be accommodated include administrator time, released time and extra duty compensation for teachers, some funds for consultants, and perhaps travel time to the county office which ordinarily offers consulting services to local districts. Results of the study can lead to recommendations for the purchase of textbooks and instructional materials. Provisions must be made for inservice training for teachers.

Inservice training is essential to ensure that the new curriculum is accepted and effectively used by the teachers. Otherwise, there is a possibility that new programs will remain on the shelf and that new textbooks and materials will not be used to the greatest advantage.

3. Participants in the Process

The board's decision to determine who participates in curriculum development is part of the process. The board will want its policy to spell out those to be consulted in the course of a major curriculum review.

In general, those affected by the outcome of a project should be allowed input. What are the roles of administrators, teachers, parents and students? Consider at what points along the way there should be informational reports and consultation with the board of education.

Community Involvement

Board rooms can fill when a textbook comes under fire, a sex

education program is proposed or the demand is made that the bible story of creation be taught in science classes along with evolution. When a particular aspect of district curriculum comes under question from a group of parents, who investigates and what procedure is used in determining if a change is justified or desirable? All of this should be spelled out in advance. A curriculum development process which includes community members in the concept stage of program development or revision will help match curriculum to community standards.

Standing Committee

A standing curriculum committee can oversee and review all curriculum projects and/or a small task force of specifically qualified people can be called together to carry out a particular project. The task force is then responsible to call in others as needed.

Administration

The superintendent is the district's educational leader and the person charged with the responsibility of putting the board's curriculum process into action. It is important that the board members and superintendent (or the staff person directly responsible for curriculum) spend time exchanging philosophy and ideas about education and that they influence each other's thinking until the ultimately adopted curriculum development process represents a consensus that everyone can support.

Teacher Involvement

Teacher involvement in curriculum development is essential. Teachers must be part of the decision-making process. The best curriculum will not be implemented well unless classroom teachers feel that the local curriculum guides are valuable and that the district selected instructional materials are useful tools to meet specific locally-adopted goals with which they agree. Curriculum specialists and district office personnel can't do it all. Math teachers from primary grades through high school need to work together on a math continuum. Reading teachers in elementary grades and English teachers at the secondary level need to get together periodically to help coordinate the K-12 English curriculum. The recommendations of the teachers who are working daily with the resulting curriculum are an important part of the development process.

Such curriculum recommendations should reflect the thinking of a broadly based group and not that of subject matter specialists alone.

Curriculum and Collective Bargaining

Under SB 160 (the Educational Employment Relations Act), the collective bargaining legislation for school employees passed in 1976, the exclusive representative of certificated employees (teachers' associations) has the right to *consult* on the instructional program. Nothing in the law prohibits individual teachers from participating in this process, but section 3543.2 of EERA states: "... the exclusive representative of certificated personnel has the right to consult on the definition of eductional objectives, the determination of the content of courses and curriculum, and the selection of textbooks to the extent such matters are within the discretion of the public school employer under the law..."

In developing and adopting instructional programs and materials, school trustees must be sensative to the teachers' association's legal role as well as the individual teacher's professional role in the development of the total instructional program.

As noted earlier, teacher participation in curriculum development is part of good management practice. CSBA's publication "How to Make Collective Bargaining Work *For* Your District" contains a chapter on a positive employee relations program (PERP) that could give you more detailed guidance in this area.

Balancing the needs of the district and the rights of employee associations will be a consideration in the formation of your curriculum councils and committees and can be accomplished in various ways.

A very large district, for example, includes representatives of the teachers' association on each of several curriculum councils. These groups are large and contain a balance of representatives from administration, teacher and community groups. See sample organization chart of curriculum committee structure on page 26.

In a medium size district, teachers on the curriculum committees may be selected for participation based on their expertise in the subject matter and grade level, but are not formal association representatives. Many districts of this size have found that the teacher representatives can provide a satisfactory informal communications link to the employee organization without additional representatives.

If curriculum or related policy is developed without teacher participation, the district risks a challenge under the consult provisions of SB 160.

Obviously, good employee relations are a goal all boards seek. If teachers are involved in the curriculum development process, if they feel their contribution is valued, if lines of communication are

open, it is less likely that curriculum policy and programs will be challenged under the collective bargaining law when they come to the board for adoption.

4. Principles and Process

The rest of the policy is a point-by-point recitation of educational principles and a broad outline of the process.

Tools and Resources

The basic tools and resources for evaluating curriculum include:

Test Scores

While tests seldom tell the whole story and cannot measure all areas of teaching and learning, they are one of your tools for evaluation.

State Frameworks

The State Board of Education and the State Department of Education publish "frameworks" in the various academic disciplines and the fine arts. These frameworks are developed by statewide committees composed of classroom teachers, subject matter specialists, and university consultants, who look at the most recent research, classroom experience, textbooks and instructional materials. From this study, the group develops, for a particular subject area, statements of philosophy and goals, points of view, alternatives and vignettes about classroom experiences which then become part of the criteria which are used in establishing state textbook adoptions. Each discipline's framework covers grades kindergarten through the twelfth grade. A framework is not a curriculum, but it contains material which is invaluable in the local district curriculum development process.

This resource, redone on a six-year cycle, encourages local districts to adopt a process which is coordinated with the state framework and textbook adoption cycle. It ensures that all subject areas are examined, modified if needed, textbooks reviewed and new textbooks purchased, if that is indicated, in light of the latest research and experience.

Feedback

By including various groups in the process, the governing board will be able to use their comments and recommendations as a tool in the evaluation process.

Observation

Student, teacher, community, and administrator attitudes toward

particular courses can often be observed during classroom visits and through comments at formal and informal curriculum discussions. These attitudes can be revealing, but are, by their very nature, subjective. In your evaluation, you will certainly want to consider if students like the class, how teachers and principals feel about the program and how much the staff supports it. Enthusiasm and acceptance are difficult to measure, but may be observed.

Support Information

Beyond observation and feedback, there may be some firm evidence of interest in or apathy towards course offerings. If more students than can be accommodated consistently sign up for a certain class, you needn't look much further to evaluate its popularity, if not its value. But if, on the other hand, the dropout or cut rate is high in a course, the value of its subject matter becomes secondary to your primary goal of making the class important enough to the students so they'll actually show up to be taught. Which brings us to the next tool in your evaluation.

Standards and Practices

Research shows that a balance of instructional methods includes individual work/study, small group interaction, and class-wide experiences — and that all are essential to learning. Your district's (as well as model) teaching practices and standards for student performance, such as tests, homework, and class participation should be examined.

Methods

Certain criteria may be employed for evaluating both programs and materials. The specific criteria for preliminary examination of instructional materials might include:

- Legal compliance with the Education Code and Title IX.
- Appropriateness to the course of study.
- Content (authoritative, up-to-date).
- Reading difficulty.
- Point of view of the author.
- Controversial issues.

Criteria for Judging Quality

In your evaluation process, you will be looking for that elusive factor, "quality." In evaluating instructional programs and materials, quality should be the relationship between the high instructional goals you have established and what is actually happening in the classroom. While professional educators use specific criteria for

this evaluation, board members should become familiar with them — they provide the clues to "how students are learning."

These techniques include the following:

- Talking with students, teachers, aides, parents.
- Looking for evidence of classroom management (daily schedule on board; individual student contractual assignments; student perception of knowing what to do next; what students are expected to do if they don't know how to complete the assignment, etc.)
- Looking for the kinds of activities in which students participate (pencil and paper tasks, audio-visual, oral, etc.) and determining if they are a part of the regular program or available only after the student finishes the work assigned.
- Looking for evidence of positive reinforcement for task accomplishment.
- Looking for evidence of opportunities for students to practice learned concepts.
- Looking for evidence other than test data that influences student placement in groups, activities, curricular materials.

Pilot Programs

Don't forget to include the evaluation of pilot programs in your evaluation plan. Because of the nature of pilot programs, you may want to evaluate them on a different schedule from that established for your other programs.

Specific questions you might want answered could include:

- Should the pilot program be continued or dropped?
- Are funds available to continue the program?
- If successful, can the pilot program be replicated?
- Does the pilot program allow for change?

Chapter 4
How Some Districts Have Done It

Yours is not the first school board to undertake its evaluation responsibilities. The following examples of the way four different districts accomplished the task may provide some guidance. But just as all these examples are different in both form and substance, so too will the unique circumstances of your district dictate a totally unique experience.

Example #1

The board of a suburban elementary district with an enrollment of approximately 1,300 students faced this situation:

- Two new board members wished to learn about the district's curriculum, and to incorporate their ideas into the total board's thinking.
- Severe budget cuts quickly made following passage of Proposition 13 had unintended effects on the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth grade programs.
- No written curriculum process existed.

To address these problems, the board held a two-day retreat. Board members, district and site-level administrators discussed what constituted a good curriculum process, and how curriculum was actually developed in their district. Finally, they identified needed changes and outlined policy statements to implement a curriculum development process. Included was a timeline and a schedule of progress reports to the board on specific curriculum development projects.

When the resulting policy appeared on a board agenda, the teachers association asked to consult on the curriculum development policy under the "consult" provisions of SB 160. This delayed the final adoption and implementation.

Example #2

A sprawling suburban/rural school district with an 8,000 student enrollment had several policy statements about curriculum and instructional material adoption, but no provisions for a curriculum development process. Although a reasonably satisfactory unwritten process was functioning, a board member proposed and administration developed the following procedure.

On a weekday afternoon, approximately 50 people consisting of board members (including the student board member), district office administrators, representative principals, teachers and parents met in an elementary multi-purpose room to hear short presentations

from a County Office curriculum consultant and the district curriculum director.

Small groups formed to discuss such basic questions as who should be involved in setting goals, providing leadership, actually writing curriculum and evaluating the results.

A steering committee met several times in the following weeks to transfer the group's conclusions into a series of statements. From these statements, a curriculum process was developed. The proposal included the formation of subject area committees and the establishment of a district-wide curriculum council composed of teacher representatives from each subject area committee, district and site level administrators, a student from each high school, a parent from each level and a board member (rotating).

Example #3

Over an eight year period in a 9,000 ADA unified district, a group of teachers and administrators worked diligently to develop a continuum of instruction. The goal was to relate specific learning objectives and teaching goals to each grade and to encourage articulation between three grade levels: K-4, 5-8, 9-12. At the same time, the district was participating in the early childhood education state plan which prompted parents and teachers to review the process for implementing the continuum in individual classrooms and individual schools in relation to specific learning goals. Program reviews were conducted throughout the district by teachers, administrators, and parents to determine how the continuum of instruction was being applied at each elementary and secondary school.

A significant benefit that emerged from this process was related to the development of proficiency standards. Rather than adding a layer of legal mandates, these standards were tied to the existing continuum. The community involvement component was designed to provide each parent with a grade-by-grade analysis of those skills students were expected to master. The continuum is reviewed on a continuous basis and is changed in accordance with student needs. The board's role has been to insist that staff time and funds be available to ensure that the continuum is updated through the program review process at all schools. This process is part of a two-year cycle during which each school's curriculum is reviewed. A complete review is conducted of activities that range from class plans to goals that are stated in the continuum or student guide. The district is able to achieve a major goal by communicating with

parents and other individuals to determine if they are satisfied with the amount and quality of homework students receive. A board commitment to train parents, teachers, administrators and classified personnel to conduct program reviews is central to this district's success.

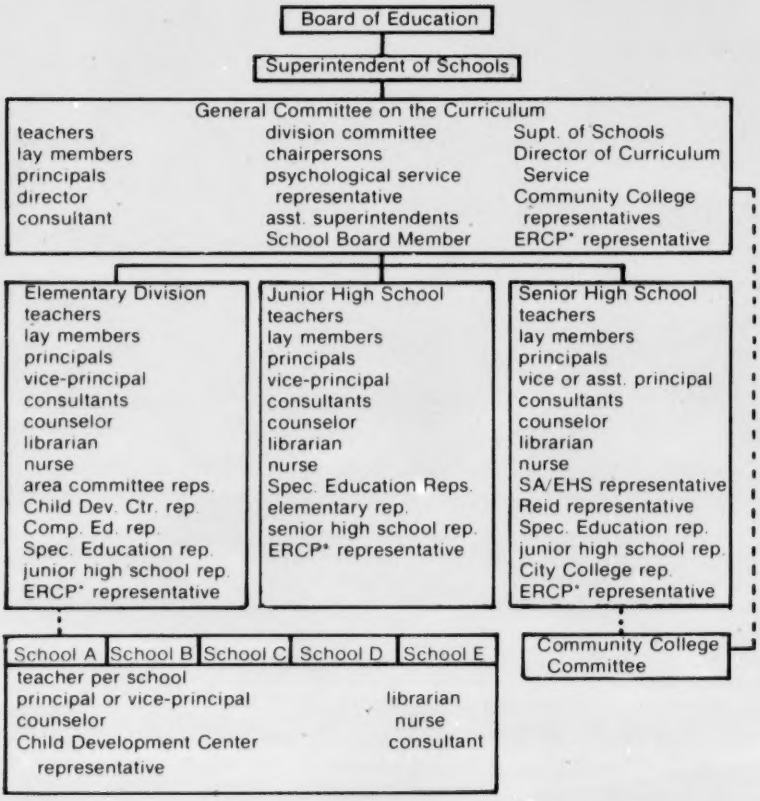
Example #4

In another district with a very large enrollment, the process is much more complicated and sophisticated. This district developed the following guidelines:

1. The course/program is consistent with the district's Statement of Educational Philosophy, current State frameworks, and the existing District scope and sequence with regard to content, organization, and methodology.
2. The course/program has significant value for achieving the goals of the Statement of Educational Philosophy.
3. The course/program content and objectives are sufficiently distinct so as to merit creation of a separate course.
4. The course content is of such magnitude that it could not be adequately taught as a unit in an existing course or could not better be dealt with as a cocurricular or extracurricular activity.
5. The level of difficulty and appropriateness of the subject matter are suitable to the general educational needs and maturity of the individual students for whom it is designed.
6. The course provides balanced, accurate, and appropriate content of significant importance to the target age group.
7. The course/program is clearly the responsibility of the schools.
8. There is sufficent consensus that, except for specialized career skills offerings, the course is a necessary part of a student's general education.
9. Prerequisites have been identified where appropriate.
10. Suitable objective criteria and procedures for course evaluation are included.
11. Costs of such a course/program constitute a wise use of available resources in terms of the numbers of students to be served and the probable continued relevancy of the course.
12. The course/program can be readily replicated in other schools.
13. Parents and the general public would be supportive of the new course.

This same district uses the following curriculum committee structure which can be adapted for your district:

Curriculum Committees
Sample Organization of Curriculum Committee Structure In a Large District



Ex Officio Members
Division and Area Curriculum Committees

Superintendent of Schools
Assistant Superintendent, Elementary Division
Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Division
Director of Curriculum Service

Smaller districts may adapt this sample, with, obviously, fewer participants at each level and perhaps fewer levels.

*Exclusive Representative, Certificated Personnel

Bibliography

Curriculum Alliance Papers

Needs Assessment and Program Evaluation in Comprehensive Curriculum Development

Learning Climate Factors — A Guideline

Curriculum Development Checklist

Sample Board Policy for Comprehensive Curriculum Planning (same as sample on pages 13-15)

[For copies, write Dr. Grant Thayer, Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools Office, 9300 East Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242]

CSBA Publications

A Discussion Guide to Initiate Study of Educational Philosophy and Goal Setting

California School Boards, Official Journal of CSBA, April/May, 1980, September, 1980, and various special issues on curriculum topics.

How to Make Collective Bargaining Work ***For*** *Your District*

"A Management Plan to Relate Curriculum Development to State Framework Cycle," by Robert Reasoner in CSBA Curriculum Update #47

State Department of Education Publications

State Frameworks

State Frameworks and Instructional Materials Adoption Calendar

Others

"Preparing Your Curriculum Guide" by Marilyn Winters, published by Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 225 North Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314

Appendix

Sample Evaluation Schedule: Textbooks

Triennial Textbook Evaluation Schedules

1980-81	1981-82	1982-83
SENIOR HIGH	SENIOR HIGH	SENIOR HIGH
Art	Distributive Education	Office Practice;
Business Law	Introduction to Business;	Cooperative Office Ed.;
Accounting	Record Keeping	Medical Clerical Prac.
Business Mathematics		Typing
Shorthand	Classroom Driver Ed.	Writing Electives
Steno Lab	Spanish	Speech and Drama
Medical Transcriber	Home Economics	Reading Improvement
English 3-4, Grade 10	Physical Education	Industrial Education
English, Grades 11-12;	Survey of Creative Arts	Science, Physical
Advanced Placement		
Dictionaries	Maps and Globes	Science, Biological
Latin		
Music	ESL - Bilingual Education	Contemporary World
		Problems
Library Education		You and Your Money;
Mathematics		
Asian Studies/		Career Guidance
Ethnic Studies		Health Education
Shaping of Western		Intro. to American
Society		Economy
Tradition and Change		U.S. History;
in Four Societies		Black History
Comp. World Religions		U.S. Gov't./American
Constitutional Rights		Political Behavior
and Responsibilities		Intro. to Sociology
Criminal Law and		Humanities
Courtroom Procedure		
Student and the Law		French
Intro. to Law		German
Enforcement		
Intro. to Anthropology		
Intro. to Psychology		
Psy. of Love & Marriage		
Senior Honors: Govt.		
in the U.S.		
Medical Occupation		
Hospital Health		
Services Occupations		

1980-81	1981-82	1982-83
ELEMENTARY	ELEMENTARY	ELEMENTARY
Grade 3 & 4 Reading and Language Arts	Music	Kindergarten: Picture Book
Grade 3 & 4 Social Studies	Grade 5 & 6 Reading and Language Arts	Grade 1 & 2 Reading and Language Arts
Grade 3 & 4 Science and Math	Grade 5 & 6 Social Studies	Grade 1 & 2 Social Studies
	Grade 5 & 6 Science and Math; Outdoor Educ.	Grade 4 Gifted
	Grade 6 Gifted	Grade 4 Gifted
		Grade 1 & 2 Science and Math
JUNIOR HIGH	JUNIOR HIGH	JUNIOR HIGH
Home Economics	Arts, Crafts	Typing 1-2; Stu. Aide
Mathematics	Introduction to Business	Industrial Education
Library Education	English, Grade 7	Grade 7 Social Studies; Growth of Cities; Developing Nations
Intro. to Anthropology	English Grade 8	Journalism; Imaginative Writing
	English 1-2; Dictionaries	Speech and Drama; Radio/TV
	Spanish	Reading Development
	Music	Health Education
	Science	French
	U.S. History (incl. Gifted); Peoples of America	German
	Comparative Systems; Educational Guidance	
	Youth and the Law; Student Council	

Sample Evaluation Calendar: Program

	79-80	80-81	81-82	82-83	83-84	84-85
1st year Evaluation	Lang. Arts	Math	Reading Lit.	Social Studies Music - Art	Bilingual Foreign Lang.	Science Health
2nd Year Adoption & Cadre Training	Science Health	Lang. Arts	Math	Reading Lit.	Social Studies Music - Art	Bilingual Foreign
3rd Year Implementation	Bilingual Foreign Lang.	Science Health	Lang. Arts	Math	Reading Lit.	Social Studies Music - Art